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8/11/2016

The Secretary
The Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY. NSW. 2001

Dear PAC

Re: Objection to Drayton South Coal Project Application Number: SSD6875

As a concerned resident, business owner and landholder in the Upper Hunter Valley, I thank you for the opportunity to oppose the 4th application by Anglo American for the Drayton South Open Cut Coal Project.

My family and I are long time land owners in the Upper Hunter Valley. Part of our business is agisting and breeding racehorses. We have a client base from many overseas countries including New Zealand, USA, Hong Kong, Singapore as well as Australia wide. Coolmore and Darley, which are situated in close proximity to Drayton South open cut coal mine, are an integral part of our business. Both these studs have publically announced that there is a strong possibility that they will relocate if the Drayton South proposal is approved. This would impact heavily on our business. Our entire income is derived from our business. We recently purchased a neighbouring property to enhance our operation. We employed 15 people in the last financial year and sold several million dollars worth of horses at 2016 sales. Four generations of the Hodges family have made their home in the Upper Hunter Valley and it breaks my heart to see our beautiful Valley destroyed by this highly polluting industry.

Admittedly we are only a small business but there are hundreds of small businesses like ours who make an honest living and pay taxes from the thoroughbred industry. These businesses will be impacted if this development gets approval. Already, some new investors in the thoroughbred industry have decided against investing in the Hunter Valley because of the extent of mining in this area.

Although I am not an expert or a scientist, I do keep abreast of issues pertaining to mining in this area.

The exposure to the atmosphere of carcinogenic heavy metals during the blasting process is a fact.

The degradation of water quality when underground aquifers are damaged is a fact.

The dust pollution affecting the health of nearby residents is a fact.

The cumulative impact of so many mines in the one area is a disaster.

The inability to rehabilitate old mine sites is a major problem. The cost is prohibitive and the results often sub-standard, plus is unviable for the coal companies to comply with. It is often more cost effective for big companies to declare themselves bankrupt rather than spending hundreds of millions of dollars on rehabilitation as is the case with the Ranger Uranium Mine owned by a subsidiary of Rio Tinto.

The fines for coal companies breaching their conditions of consent are inadequate. In some cases it is more viable for a coal company to breach environmental consent conditions and pay a fine, than to adhere to the conditions of consent.

World opinion and concern about man-made climate change is strengthening and a push towards 'renewables' is occurring at a rapid rate. Some of the forward thinking big financial institutions are moving away from investment in fossil fuels.

Australia initially was a world leader in addressing climate change but is now becoming known as the country doing the least to address the climate change problem. As the science becomes more undeniable this push to squeeze every last dollar possible from the fossil fuel industry borders on lunacy.

I want a sustainable future for my family and for all families. Destroying the very environment which can provide this is simply criminal.

These are a few reasons why, in my opinion, it would be madness to approve this expansion and jeopardise the existence of thriving long term industries such as thoroughbred breeding, wine making and other agricultural pursuits, for the promise of a few short term jobs in a highly polluting, out dated industry.

I respectfully ask that you register my objection to this proposal and seriously consider my objection when assessing the appropriateness of the Drayton South Open Cut Coal Proposal.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Alison Hodges
Director